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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2007

In Today's Papers

Party Leaders Speak Out on Terror

All papers report that political party leaders spoke out at their party group meetings in the parliament Tuesday. Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal, recalling a recent terrorist attack in the southeastern province of Sirnak that claimed the lives of 12 civilians and yesterday's blast in the Aegean city of Izmir killing one and injuring 11 people, said terror in Turkey continued at full speed. Baykal said the recent counter-terror agreement signed between Turkey and Iraq was a "comedy." He said, "We made a grave mistake during those negotiations, and asked to use the hot pursuit right which does not require the consent of any country, and which was granted to Turkey by the UN with Iraq's consent. Although it's clear that Iraq is not keen on taking measures against PKK terrorism, our government still relies on them." Baykal also recalled Iran's bombing of northern Iraq against terrorists, underlining the inaction of Iraqi authorities against the Iranian attacks. The CHP leader also opposed education in languages of Turkey's ethnic groups, saying that would be like "planting a bomb under Turkey's unity."

Far right MHP leader Devlet Bahceli called on the parliament to authorize the Turkish military's right of hot pursuit into northern Iraq.

Ahmet Turk, leader of the Pro-Kurdish DTP, said in reply to Turkish General Staff (TGS) chief Yasar Buyukanit's recent speech calling for "measures" against the DTP for refusing to declare the PKK a terror organization, that "Buyukanit is targeting both the DTP and the parliament." Turk also said Prime Minister Erdogan's statements that Turkey's Kurds were not a minority but rather a part of the majority were similar to the statements of the PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan. "If we are given guarantees, attempts could be made to see the PKK lay down its arms in two months," Turk said.

Meanwhile, liberal Radikal quotes President Abdullah Gul as saying en route to Strasbourg yesterday, "Everybody should openly reject terror. A new period has commenced, and everybody has come to the parliament. It would be a pity to harm this development."

Gul on EU Reforms, Article 301, Terrorism

All papers report that on Tuesday, President Abdullah Gul spoke with reporters aboard his plane en route to Strasbourg where he will visit the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in his first trip abroad. Gul stressed that Turkey needs a stronger focus on EU reforms. "Reforms can be fast or slow, but the important thing is that the trend is positive. The government will carry out the necessary steps with regard to Turkey's membership in the EU, and I will act as a leader of the effort," Gul said. Gul noted that Turkish enthusiasm for EU reforms has declined in reaction to the negative attitude of Europe. Gul also acknowledged that penal code article 301, making it a crime to "insult Turkishness," was one of the shortcomings in Turkey's EU drive, but expressed confidence that the parliament will raise the controversial provision. Gul emphasized that in the "new period" Turkey has entered, people would be able to express even the most radical views. He warned against attempts to harm this new period, urging all to distance themselves from terrorism and violence.

Bombs Kill 1, Injure 11 in Izmir

All papers report that two bombs exploded in Izmir yesterday with a three-and-a-half hour interval. The first bomb exploded near a garbage bin and the second was planted on a stolen motorbike. One person died and 11 were injured. Police believe that the bombs were planted by the PKK terrorist organization.

Armenian Genocide Resolution (AGR) in US Congress

Sabah, Milliyet, Radikal, Zaman: Islamist oriented Zaman's

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Washington correspondent reports that the AGR will be on the US Congress' agenda on October 10. Mainstream Milliyet and Sabah highlighted the fact that the countdown started at the Congress on the Armenian resolution and that PM Erdogan and President Gul are considering calling President Bush separately to ask his support and initiative to prevent proceeding of the AGR in the Congress. Liberal Radikal says that the resolution first will be debated at the Foreign Relations Committee of the US Congress on October 10 and the following week it will be carried to the full commission.

Sami Kohen comments in the mainstream daily Milliyet: "It seems the Armenian Genocide Resolution will be taken up by the US Congress next week. Due to strong efforts by Nancy Pelosi, it is almost certain that the resolution will pass in the House. The only hope, though very dim, is that the resolution may be re-edited or put on hold at the very last minute. In fact the supporters of this resolution are facing pressure from outside, including from the administration as well as from the State Department. The very latest example was the joint letter to Pelosi signed by eight former Secretaries of State against the passage of a resolution. Even

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though it did not get very much attention in the Turkish media, this letter alone is a very important development as US Secretaries of State of both Republican and Democrat administrations have clearly demonstrated a common stance and reminded the House of the consequences of passing the resolution. The members of the House have to make a choice between their domestic concerns, such as Armenian-American votes, and the importance of America's ally as a regional player."

Editorial Commentary on US-Turkey Relations and the Fight against the PKK

Yilmaz Oztuna observes in the conservative daily Turkiye: "The recent meeting between the Turkish Foreign Minister and the US Secretary of State was like an insensitive joke. Regarding Turkey's

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fully justified cause on the PKK, Secretary Rice mentioned to Minister Babacan that the US has been combating the PKK in Northern Iraq and now wants to finish this up by extending the struggle

against the PKK throughout the world. Given her good diplomatic skills, her remarks can only be regarded as a joke. Yet she has to realize that Turks cannot tolerate jokes on such a sensitive matter.

Turkey, on the other hand, will very soon regret signing a security agreement with Iraq which basically ruled out the hot pursuit option against the PKK in Iraq. The Interior Minister of Iraq who signed the agreement is nothing more than a puppet of Barzani as well as the US. Overall, the US continues to bear a grudge against Turkey because of the rejection of the March 1 [2003] parliamentary motion, and in return, asks Turkey to accept its Iran policy with no objections. Otherwise, the US hints, the Kurdish issue and the Armenian issue will be used against Turkey. The sooner we realize that the better."

TV Highlights

NTV

Domestic News

- Speaking to his ruling AKP group, Prime Minister Erdogan called on the nation to vote "yes" in the upcoming referendum on October 21 which will decide whether or not presidents will be elected by direct popular vote.

- Interior Minister Besir Atalay, Farming Minister Mehdi Eker and State Minister Mehmet Simsek visited Beytussebap in Sirnak province to offer condolences to the families who lost relatives in a recent PKK attack which claimed 12 lives in the region.

- Women's organizations announced Tuesday they will resist constitutional reforms harming the principle of gender equality in the existing constitution.

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- The Turkish Central Bank governor Dursun Yilmaz warned that statements made by government officials on monetary policies were harming the autonomy of the Central Bank.

International News

- On Tuesday, the Iraqi Parliament unanimously voted to issue a statement condemning the US Congress' "non-binding" resolution calling for the division of Iraq along ethnic lines.

- European Parliament's foreign affairs commission is to vote on the Turkey report written by Ria Oomen-Ruijten.

- Israel has acknowledged that Israeli warplanes hit a "military target" deep inside Syrian territory on September 6.

- British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has made a surprise visit to Iraq at the same time as announcing he hopes to bring 1000 soldiers home before Christmas.

WILSON